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others olive and dusky, with dark frizzled hair, might be members of aristocratic Florentine families. One, trying on a suit of fluted and gilded armor, is fatigued, and with a bored expression on his face is stretching his arms: a second twists his head to catch a back view of the fastening of his greaves, which a stooping artificer has strapped on to his leg; another, supporting himself with outstretched hand against a pillar, bends backward to feel that the spur on his raised foot is securely fixed to his heel. Through the great central gateway is seen a knight in his panoply, mounted on a caparisoned charger. Other figures descending or ascending the steps from the gateway to the yard, link together, as it were, the left and right sections of the chief figure composition. The right section comprises nobles examining arms, such as swords and ivory-handled steel cross-bows, or stirrups and arbalets. A young noble glances down the length of a Ferrara blade; a second and third, bending the points of their swords on the ground, test the spring of the steel; another signor is the centre of a little knot of men scrutinizing hilts and handles. Interspersed are friends who have accompanied the buyers, seemingly giving approval of purchases, or commenting upon defects of workmanship. To the front is a crouching smith, who has strewed at the feet of customers an armful of weapons. Further, on the right, cross-bows are being inspected by connoisseurs of accuracy and sighting and weight of pull.

The variety of types of men, young and old, effeminate and brawny, of expressions ingenuous and crafty, of attitudes hasty and leisurely, is a source of pleasure without fatigue. The dignity of the composition is nowhere marred by rude movements, and a balance of light and shade is maintained with valuable effect. A tendency to that graceful lengthening of limb which distinguished Greek sculpture of the period of Lysippus may be detected in the figure drawing. The coloring is brilliant and voluptuous, reminding the spectator at one time of brightness seen in monumental paintings by early Tuscan painters, such as Benozzo Gozzoli and Sandro Botticelli; at another, of the richness to be found in those of later Venetian painters like Paul Veronese. There can be little difference of opinion that the work is, perhaps, the most important hitherto executed by Sir F. Leighton.

The work is stated to be executed in the process called spirit fresco, invented by Mr. T. Gambier Parry, and employed by him in his well-known and beautiful decorative work in the St. Andrew's Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral.

THE MERITS OF RUGS.

THE large pieces of furniture that in all rooms stand against the wall—the sofas, the pianofortes, the side-boards, the book-cases, the bedsteads, the wardrobes, the washstands, the bureaux—do not need any carpet under them; the carpet that is put under them stands for so much wasted money, and yet we go on putting down yards of carpet where it is never seen, where the dust collects and is only attacked in weekly sweepings, and where it keeps a sort of color, while the rest changes color and fades. Let any one give a rug a fair trial, and observe for himself how much less dust will be made in the room, how much more easily the room is kept clean, and how much more manageable the furniture is when the weekly sweeping or the daily dusting has to be got through. In no case should any of the large pieces of furniture rest upon the rug; for it ought to be an every-day or at least an any-day matter to turn it up and brush underneath it, or roll it up and carry it out to be shaken or swept.

It is advisable to buy a good rug, large enough to cover all the floor you wish to cover, even if it strain your purse a little; for a good rug will last a lifetime,

and, indeed, some rugs are well on their way to last a second lifetime. The best Turkey, Persian, and Indian rugs are made by hand, of pure wool, and are so thick that if a hot coal fall on one of them, the charred portion, which, in the case of a Brussels carpet, could never be effaced, will disappear in a few days' wear. After much using a good Eastern rug, walking on the best Brussels carpet feels like walking on the wooden floor. To an artistic eye, an Eastern rug that is handsome to begin with grows handsomer with time and use, and even one that was a little staring and pretentious at first, gets toned down and subdued by being long walked over, just as if it were a human being. The gain of employing good rugs is so considerable in health and cleanliness alone, that the time must come when they will be "your only wear."

THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF ART.

THE idea of cultivating taste as a moral duty may seem odd to some persons, but an admirable homily on

be, a cheerful, happy habitation, to which the absent members of a family may look with love, and to which the wanderer will always return with joy, we must have it not only clean, for cleanliness is next to godliness, and wholesome, which is another way of saying holy, but also beautiful. Refinement cannot go with sordidness and ugliness. We have decorated our churches sometimes perhaps a little too much. And it is surely time we turned to that second church, the temple in which even the old heathen placed a family altar, and learned to give our homes a little more of the beauty which comes of order and purity. Money is not what we most require for such a purpose. A pleasant and lovely home need not be expensive. To make a house beautiful we do not require gilding and carving, marble and bronze, but we do want a little taste, and perhaps a little trouble. Simplicity is not incompatible with art, even high art. It is, indeed, as we are so often taught by the art of the Greeks, and the scarcely less perfect art of the thirteenth century, an element in true beauty, and no one can think a room less pleasant because it is furnished with studied plainness.

A pretty and pleasant house, whether in city or country, is a centre of life radiating into other houses. If a house shows signs of being cared for and well treated, other houses soon begin to look like it. Art is very infectious in such things. Taste spreads with wonderful rapidity. Thirty years ago, if you asked schoolboys or young ladies about their knowledge of architecture, they would probably have repeated the names of the five classical orders, and there would have begun and ended their information. Now every church, almost every school, in our land shows signs of the knowledge and taste in Gothic and Elizabethan art of young curates and rectors' daughters. It is high time something of the kind should spread to our dwelling-houses. How many young ladies now spend their time making minute water-color sketches while their father has to bring in a house-painter to "do up" a sitting-room. Yet there is no reason why a young lady should not paint and decorate a door as easily as she paints a landscape or a fisherman's family. If the complete decoration of a room would be too much, all the details, not only the carving of mouldings and the coloring of panels, but even the arrangement of a tile pattern and the design of a window leading, might be done at home.

One house in which the inmates set themselves from their first coming to do nothing except in good taste would soon become a centre of civilization in a country district. Nothing will keep the boys at home of an evening more certainly than a little art, whether music or painting. The sons of a family in moments of leisure could carve a chimney-piece which would

be a credit to the country at large. The trouble spent in learning a quartet would be perhaps just as well, certainly no worse, spent in learning to paint a motto over the door. It requires no greater exertion to make an embroidered curtain or portière than to make a dozen "tidies." What is chiefly wanted for such ambitious efforts is a little taste and knowledge, and the schools of art all through the country might supply both if they would. So far they have done very little for the improvement of home art. Perhaps the school water-colors are a little less hard and impossible. Perhaps a few students have learned enough figure drawing not to make the men and women in their sketches look so like jointed dolls. But very little has yet been done to give people rules how to draw and stencil a diaper all over a bedroom wall, how to choose two delicate colors for the panels of a cupboard, or how to make a plaster-work pattern for the drawing-room ceiling.

To prove that this is not expecting too much, one has only to point to cases like that one at Lambeth, in which a school of art, becoming connected with the



"THE HUNTRESS DIANA" AT THE CHATEAU D'ANET. BY JEAN GOUJON.

DRAWN BY MAILLART AFTER THE MARBLE NOW IN THE LOUVRE.

the subject by that clever English writer, Mr. W. J. Loftie, puts forth the arguments in support of it in a very striking manner. If there be "sermons in stones," how much more in an entire edifice! But let Mr. Loftie speak for himself:

Strangely enough, in the minds of most of us, music enters largely into the idea we form of the happiness of heaven. But why do we exclude all other kinds of art? And if we look on the home here as the prototype of the home hereafter, we may see reasons for making it, as a sacred thing, beautiful and pleasant, as, indeed, we have no hesitation about making our churches. If we follow Bishop Butler in speaking of this life as a state of probation, and if we allow that home life is the highest "ideal type of the life in heavenly mansions," we find ourselves forced to go a little further, and to contemplate our own houses, our firesides, our sitting-rooms, our surroundings in the house, or, in a word, all those things which go to make up our notions of home, with a kind of moral and even a religious reverence. To make home what it should

practical art of a pottery, has produced some of the best work England has had for five hundred years.

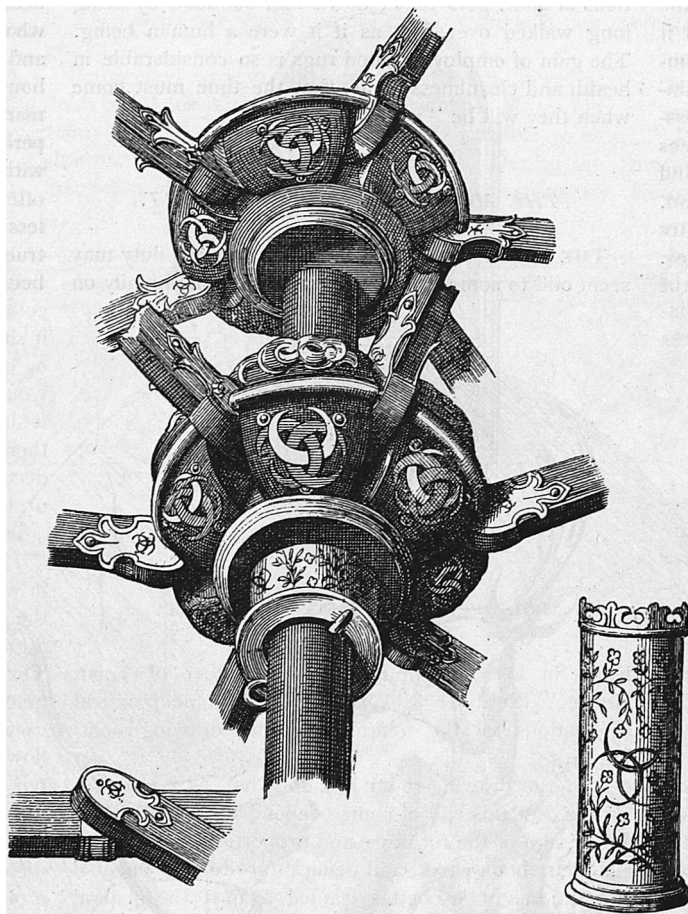
Drawing classes and clubs sensibly conducted might do much for the improvement of art at home, but, so far as they have hitherto been tried, they have usually degenerated into parties for the cultivation of the art of flirting. In any case, a good teacher is one of the first requisites, and one generally done without. The second thing required is subordination, which of all virtues is the one most often wanting among amateurs. A class well conducted and well organized might undertake the painting and decoration of a village school or a mechanics' institute, but the difficulty would of course be double. It would be necessary for every one to work under the direction of one master-mind, and for such a master-mind to be found. Few clergymen are without some knowledge of architecture. Few intelligent men, in fact, are without some special knowledge of one branch of art or another. It is very easy to get such people to give short lectures. People would not be tired by a quarter of an hour on the structure of a flying buttress, or the life of Reynolds, or the frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa, or the meaning of Dürer's *Melancholia*, or the Japanese way of drawing foliage. A few diagrams are necessary, but they are easily made, and few places are without an amateur able to draw them.

The civilizing influence of art has been matter of remark since the time of Ovid at least, and it is high time in these days of culture that we should try its virtue. We talk too much about these things and do too little. The smallest child in the village school learns singing, but no child learns drawing. Yet of the two—singing and drawing—which is the more likely to be of use in after life? It is objected, perhaps, that all children have not a taste for drawing, but neither have all children a taste for music, as we have full proof every Sunday in church at least. A more serious objection is, that masters and mistresses have already too many "subjects," and cannot make them all equally familiar. But the thing might at least be tried, and it would soon be found that an amateur would turn up to solve the difficulty in a great many places, just as at present the village choir is often trained by voluntary labor.

But it is more among adults than children that the beneficial influence of art may be seen. In small country towns and villages it is sometimes not easy to get so many performers together as will constitute a band, but a class for art study, for drawing, or carving, would not require any particular number. No matter how small the village, the beer saloon finds no difficulty in keeping full; and there is nothing so efficacious in counteracting the beer saloon as a little cultivation. It is ridiculous to lecture on temperance and force total abstinence on hard-worked men, unless you often find them some compensating entertainment; and perhaps before very long this truth will be recognized, and some artistic object of interest for evening entertainment be added to the few now existing to counteract the tavern. The longing for beauty is acknowledged by the tavern-keepers. They are obliged to supply the want. They have music if possible, and the liquor saloon is transformed into a palace. Marble and granite columns, carved oak stalls, shining glass and silver, colored lights and mirrors, are lavishly spent to attract the workman. If such an outlay pays, and it must pay or it would not be incurred so frequently, we may feel perfectly sure that the saloon-keeper has hit on a want and supplies it. All these scenic and architectural effects are produced because he knows that the people whose lives are spent in labor have a craving for the sight of what is beautiful, and that if they can resist the mere attraction of drinking by itself, they will not be able to resist it when it is backed up and helped by all the gorgeous surroundings of the liquor saloon.

A movement has of late years been made at the east end of London to do something to mitigate the sordid ugliness of home life. That working people should care for art or should like to see pretty things, was thought a short time ago perfectly ridiculous. Their houses were

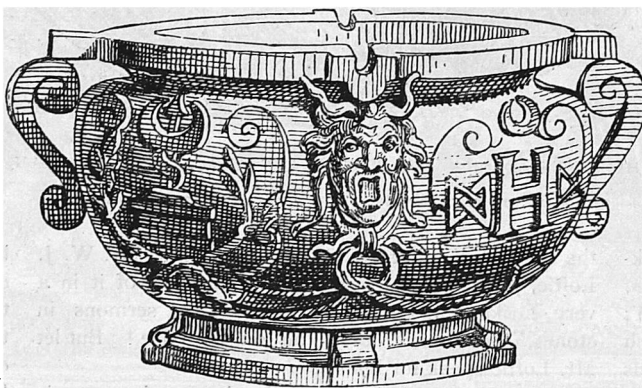
miserable and filthy, and they showed no taste, either in their dress or in their personal habits. One of the first moves was made by a parochial exhibition of works of art, which was held in one or two places. The people brought some curious specimens of domestic manufacture. Old samplers, full rigged ships in fish-bone, cardboard models, a few drawings, a black letter family Bible or two, an old German engraving—many such objects were shown, and the interest excited was very great. Then came the Bethnal Green Museum. To everybody's surprise, the people flocked there in crowds,



DETAILS OF THE PARASOL OF DIANE DE POITIERS.

and competent witnesses declared that the workman's remarks on pictures were often at least as sensible as those of some professed critics.

Mothers wonder oftentimes that their sons care so little for staying at home. But does it occur to them to ask themselves what they have done to make home happy and pleasant—not happy only, but pleasant also. Even a merry house, if it is untidy and dirty, if it is dingy and ugly, is unattractive to young people. They are unconsciously very sensitive to external impressions. The comfort and good taste of the club drawing-room



SMALL MARBLE MORTAR WITH THE EMBLEMS OF DIANE DE POITIERS.

has as much to do as the company and newspapers in bringing young men from home. Our sons are literally driven out to seek away from home that comfort and order which is there denied them. We nip the youthful taste in the bud; we look on mere art as a useless expense, and we lose hold of the strongest cord by which we might bind our children to home.

A wise father—all whose children have turned out well, and in different places and employments still love their home—attributes it largely to the fact that he encouraged each of them from the first to "make a collection." Some of them had more decided taste than

others. To several, postage-stamps and such insipid objects were enough. Others preferred pictures, engravings, carvings, or something distinctly artistic. In after life all these young men and women found themselves in the possession of at least a portion of the pocket-money they had received in youth, and found themselves moreover possessed of that inestimable advantage, whether in a busy or in an idle life, a love for something which would serve as an amusement and relaxation for leisure hours. Such people have no occasion for card-playing or gambling to pass a long evening. To them a spare hour is not an enemy to be killed. Satan finds no mischief for their idle hands to do. They wonder how any one can complain of ennui, for their time is fully occupied, and life is only too short for what they want to get into it.

There is a yearning toward beauty in form and color as well as in sound and in morals, and this yearning has almost always taken a religious direction. Even the impure worship of the Grecian gods had its pure æsthetic side; and the neglected author of the *Book of Wisdom* points it out in words worthy to be remembered: "The sky is fair," he says, "but He that made it fairer;" and he counsels those who love nature to look beyond it, observing that they "deemed neither fire nor wind nor the swift air, nor the circle of the stars, nor the violent water, nor the lights of heaven, to be the gods which govern the world; with whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods, let them know how much better the Lord of them is: for the first author of beauty hath created them." And St. Augustine expresses the same thought or one like it, and with almost equal majesty.

It is to this upward yearning of men's minds that the wise educator will address himself. The higher our conception of material beauty, the higher will be our ideal of moral beauty. The more we study nature, the more complex, the more complete she appears. The higher we rise in our intellectual progress, the farther does wisdom seem to soar above us. And as day by day, year by year, age by age, we enlarge our power of conceiving beauty and harmony, the more beautiful, the more harmonious does creation appear to us.

THE BRITISH EMBASSY ROOMS AT ROME.

JUDGING from all accounts, the decorations of the rooms of the British Embassy at Rome must be very beautiful. Those of the ball-room and the supper-room especially are characterized by interesting features. On one side of the saloon is a baldacchino on a raised dais; and beneath the canopy stands a chair of state, for the monarch of England, which is a very exquisite work of art. The correspondent of *The London Standard* says:

"The design is copied from a throne painted by Pinturicchio, in the series of frescoes at Siena representing the *facta et gesta* of Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Pope Pius the Second, and is executed in 'noce,' or walnut-wood, with a finish and perfection which prove that the present wood-carvers of Siena are not unworthy of the famed artificers in that branch who preceded them, and of whom they continue the traditions. The canopy is of crimson velvet, emblazoned with the royal arms of England, very richly embroidered and boldly designed. The needlework was executed at South Kensington. The frescoes on the ceiling are accurately copied from the celebrated paintings in the Villa Madama by Giulio Romano. The chandeliers are remarkably fine specimens of modern Venetian glass, as delicate and brilliant in color as if a group of gigantic tropical shrubs in full flower had suddenly been changed by enchantment into precious stones, and so blossomed permanently. The floor is one of the very few parquets in Rome.

"Perhaps the gem of the whole is the royal supper-room. This apartment is hung with a paper of English manufacture, of deep gold, stamped in high relief to imitate gilt leather. Around the walls runs a dado, about five feet high, which has the appearance of black